

On March 22, college wrestling fans were treated to an exceptional wrestling match as the top-ranked University of Iowa won its 21st national team title and crowned two individual national champions, Mark Perry and Brent Metcalf. Three of the Hawkeyes' seven All-Americans competed in the finals in St. Louis for a combined team score of 117.5 points.

I want to extend my congratulations to coach Tom Brands, who returned to his alma mater and led the team to a perfect 8-0 conference record in his second season as head coach. Impressive feats such as these are why Coach Brands was named Coach of the Year by both the Big Ten Conference and the National Wrestling Coaches Association.

Congratulations also are in order for senior Mark Perry, who overcame a knee injury to win his second national title. He is only the 14th University of Iowa wrestler to earn two national titles. Additionally, Perry rounded out his final year with his fourth All-American honor.

The other individual national title winner was sophomore Brent Metcalf. Metcalf ended the season on an impressive 23-match winning streak and earned many accolades, including the Dan Hodge Trophy, Big Ten Wrestler of the Year, and Outstanding Wrestler at both the NCAA and Big Ten championships.

The University of Iowa Hawkeyes wrestling program began in 1911 and has produced a rich history of champions. With 32 Big Ten conference championships and 21 NCAA Division I national championships, the Hawkeyes wrestling team is a premier program. The extraordinary achievement of this season is a tribute to the skill and dedication of the many wrestlers, coaches, students, alumni, families, and fans that have helped to make the University of Iowa a wrestling powerhouse.

Winning the national championship, finishing the season with a 21-1 overall dual record, and winning the Big Ten conference championship for the 32nd time has brought national acclaim to the University of Iowa. I know the fans of the university will revel in this accomplishment as they look forward to the 2009 season.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again I congratulate the University of Iowa for their tremendous success.

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Iowa Men's Wrestling Program on winning the 2008 NCAA Division I National Wrestling Championship.

Dating back to the early 1900's my home State of Iowa has lead the way in shaping what competitive collegiate wrestling has become today. In fact, the first ever NCAA Division I National Wrestling Championship Tournament took place in Ames, Iowa. Anyone who follows the sport will tell you that you can always count on a team from the State of Iowa finishing among the top of almost every tournament.

At all levels, the State of Iowa has a long storied and honored wrestling tradition and it

is the preferred sport of many Iowa households. It has been a hallmark of Iowa athletics for decades and its competition remains prominent in the majority of middle schools, high schools, state colleges and universities throughout the state today. There is a tremendous amount of hard-work, discipline and dedication required to succeed in wrestling, common characteristics of all Iowans which may explain why we have been so successful in the sport for so long.

The University of Iowa's wrestling program has significantly contributed to this success and tradition. It has historically been, and remains, considered among the nation's elite programs. In 2008 the University of Iowa won its 21st national title, its first since 2000, and crowned two individual champions—senior Mark Perry and sophomore Brent Metcalf. And, Coach Tom Brands was selected as 2008 Coach of the Year.

Again, I wish to congratulate the Iowa wrestling program on a job well done as they celebrate their 2008 national championship and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well by adopting this resolution.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1100, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 330) supporting the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 330

Whereas on average, a person is sexually assaulted in the United States every two-and-a-half minutes;

Whereas the Department of Justice reports that 191,670 people in the United States were sexually assaulted in 2005;

Whereas 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have been victims of rape or attempted rape;

Whereas the Department of Defense received 2,688 reports of sexual assault involving members of the Armed Forces in fiscal year 2007;

Whereas children and young adults are most at risk of sexual assault, as 44 percent of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18, and 80 percent are under the age of 30;

Whereas sexual assault affects women, men, and children of all racial, social, religious, age, ethnic, and economic groups in the United States;

Whereas only 41 percent of sexual assault victims pursue prosecution by reporting their attack to law enforcement agencies;

Whereas two-thirds of sexual crimes are committed by persons who are not strangers to the victims;

Whereas sexual assault survivors suffer emotional scars long after the physical scars have healed;

Whereas prevention education programs carried out by rape crisis and women's health centers have the potential to reduce the prevalence of sexual assault in their communities;

Whereas because of recent advances in DNA technology, law enforcement agencies have the potential to identify the rapists in tens of thousands of unsolved rape cases;

Whereas aggressive prosecution can incarcerate rapists and therefore prevent them from committing further crimes;

Whereas free, confidential help is available to all survivors of sexual assault through the National Sexual Assault Hotline, more than 1,000 rape crisis centers across the United States, and other organizations that provide services to assist survivors of sexual assault; and

Whereas April is recognized as "National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month provides a special opportunity to educate the people of the United States about sexual violence and to encourage the prevention of sexual assault, the improved treatment of its survivors, and the prosecution of its perpetrators;

(B) it is appropriate to properly acknowledge the more than 20,000,000 men and women who have survived sexual assault in the United States and salute the efforts of survivors, volunteers, and professionals who combat sexual assault;

(C) national and community organizations and private sector supporters should be recognized and applauded for their work in promoting awareness about sexual assault, providing information and treatment to its survivors, and increasing the number of successful prosecutions of its perpetrators; and

(D) public safety, law enforcement, and health professionals should be recognized and applauded for their hard work and innovative strategies to increase the percentage of sexual assault cases that result in the prosecution and incarceration of the offenders;

(2) Congress strongly recommends national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, colleges and universities, and the media to promote, through National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, awareness of sexual violence and strategies to decrease the incidence of sexual assault; and

(3) Congress supports the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Studies show that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in their lifetime and that, on average, a person is sexually assaulted in the United States every 2½ minutes. In my State of Wisconsin, there were 5,628 sexual assaults reported in the year 2004, the last year statistics are available. This marks a 3.7 percent increase from the previous year. Nationwide, we know that children and young adults are most at risk. Forty-four percent of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18, and 80 percent are under the age of 30.

Although most victims are younger women, the effects of sexual assault cross all racial, social, religious, ethnic, and economic boundaries. Whether the crime is rape, incest, child sexual abuse, stalking, or sexual harassment, sexual assault impacts our schools, our workplaces, our streets, and our homes. Survivors are our sons, our daughters, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our grandparents.

In addition to the physical effects of victimization, the emotional scars felt by sexual assault survivors may persist long after the physical scars have healed. Sexual violence costs an estimated \$127 billion per year in medical expenses, lost productivity, treatment of psychological trauma, and pain and suffering. Yet we know that only 41 percent of sexual assault survivors pursue prosecution by reporting their attack to law enforcement officials, and despite the support services offered by the National Sexual Assault Hotline and more than 1,000 crisis centers across the Nation, fewer than 50 percent of survivors ever tell anyone about their experience. These statistics are staggering and unconscionable. Despite the alarming prevalence of sexual assault, there is a clear and significant need for more public education and awareness.

National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month does just this. Observed each year in April, this dedicated month provides a special opportunity to educate Americans about sexual violence and to encourage the prevention of sexual assault, the improved treatment of its survivors, and the prosecution of its perpetrators.

As part of the National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we recognize national and community organizations, as well as private sector supporters, for their work in promoting awareness about sexual assault. We also applaud public safety, law enforcement, and health professionals for their hard work and innovative strategies to increase the percentage of sexual assault cases that result in the prosecution and incarceration of offenders.

Along with my colleague, Congressman TED POE from Texas, I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 330 to recognize April 2008 as National Sexual

Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. By supporting this resolution, we highlight the efforts of individuals and agencies that provide rape crisis intervention and prevention services. We also call attention to sexual violence as a major public health issue and raise awareness of the need for increased resources for preventing sexual violence.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quickly extend my thanks to a number of advocates for their work on sexual assault prevention. In Wisconsin, we are incredibly lucky to have the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault working to create the social change necessary to end sexual violence. My thanks to the Coalition and their member organizations across the State for the important work that they do.

Since the first national observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in 2001, many Members of Congress have been actively involved in ensuring congressional support for efforts to raise awareness around sexual violence. I wholeheartedly thank all the cosponsors of this bipartisan resolution for once again lending their names to this worthy cause.

Finally, I want to extend my sincerest thank you to my colleague, Congressman TED POE, for his strong support as the lead sponsor of this resolution. Mr. POE has been a dedicated advocate for victims and victims' rights in this Congress, and I have very much admired his commitment to ending sexual violence in all forms. Thank for your hard work and leadership on this resolution.

Although we have made significant progress, we still have far to go in eradicating the harm inflicted on our community by sexual assault. I urge all of my colleagues to fully support this resolution recognizing the National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 330, recognizing April as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Every 2½ minutes, a person is sexually assaulted in the United States. Sadly, one in six women have been victims of rape or attempted rape. Two-thirds of these assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, and yet only 40 percent of sexual assaults are reported to the police.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month attempts to change these startling statistics by promoting educational programs, victim support services, advances in DNA and forensics technology, and aggressive prosecution and incarceration of sexual offenders. National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month helps to educate the public about sexual violence in our communities and the long-term effects

on these victims. It also recognizes the selfless work of staff and volunteers at rape crisis centers and other community organizations across the United States that provide counseling and victim support services to sexual assault survivors.

This year, the featured event of Sexual Assault Awareness Month was "Shop to End Sexual Violence." Businesses throughout America pledged to donate a percentage of their sales during April to increase awareness of sexual violence and promote community involvement in reducing these crimes.

With education and community support, it is my hope that more victims will pursue prosecution of their attackers by reporting these assaults. Once the victims take the first and critical steps, it is up to lawmakers and law enforcement to ensure these violent offenders are put away.

Earlier this month, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing on H.R. 5057, to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Program. The Debbie Smith Program, originally authorized in 2000, awards grants to State and local governments to reduce the DNA backlog of samples collected from crime scenes and the backlog for entry into the national DNA database. Through these grants, State and local governments received funding to test approximately 104,000 DNA cases between 2004 and 2007.

These grants have also funded the collection of 2.5 million DNA samples from convicted offenders and arrestees for inclusion in the national DNA database. The Department of Justice estimates that over 5,000 "hits" or matches are the result of this DNA backlog reduction. This is a positive step forward, but we must continue our efforts to reduce the DNA backlog to provide justice for sexual assault victims and put their attackers behind bars for good.

I wish to thank my Judiciary colleague, Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN, for sponsoring this resolution, and also thank Congressman TED POE for taking the lead on our side of the aisle in moving forward this important resolution. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time at this moment. I would continue to reserve.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), the coauthor of this resolution.

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am proud to have introduced this National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month resolution with my friend, Congresswoman BALDWIN from Wisconsin. I appreciate her leadership in bringing this issue to the national attention of all of us.

When I was an assistant district attorney back in Texas, I prosecuted rapists for 8 years, and then I sat on the bench as a judge in Houston for 22 years, hearing felony criminal cases.

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During those 30 years, I learned a lot about sexual assault and the devastation it has on victims.

Probably one of the best statements ever made about a sexual assault and how it affects the victim was a sexual assault victim who was 90 years old and had been raped. She testified on the witness stand that what happened to her “was a fate worse than death.” And, yes, many times it is a fate worse than murder itself, the crime that occurs against these individuals throughout our country. It devastates the victim, and after the crime occurs the victim faces a lifetime of battle to recover. In many cases, sexual assault or rape is an attempt on the part of the offender to destroy the inner soul and being of the victim, and sometimes that actually occurs.

When I came to Congress, I founded the Victims’ Rights Caucus to advocate on behalf of victims so that this caucus could be a voice for all crime victims. The gentlewoman from Wisconsin who introduced this resolution is a member of this caucus and continues to be a leader in public awareness.

With this resolution, I hope we can educate the public about this horrendous crime, but also thank the outstanding victim advocates who hold the victim’s hand from the time the crime is committed and sometimes throughout the entire episode until the trial is over with.

Rape and sexual assault statistics are difficult to determine because many victims are ashamed and afraid to come forward and report these crimes. There are outstanding support services in this country, like the National Sexual Assault Hotline, and many, many hundreds of thousands of crisis centers throughout the country, but still sexual assault victims are reluctant to come forward. By drawing attention to sexual violence and speaking about it on the national level here in our Congress, we can encourage victims to report these crimes and get the help they need.

Predators intimidate and threaten victims with the hope that these victims will never tell anyone about it. Victims need to understand that American citizens support victims and are on their side. Of those reported sexual assaults, there are haunting statistics. Three out of four victims knew the perpetrator that committed the crime against them. The rapist is not a stranger.

I would like to relate one case that occurred many years ago when I was prosecuting these types of cases. I will call this young lady Lisa, to protect the privacy of her family. She was a student at one of our universities in Houston. She left the university one night and stopped at a service station for help, because her car was having difficulty in moving down the highway.

She came in contact with an individual that I will call Luke. He was not a service station attendant. He was just a criminal. He kidnapped Lisa. He sexually assaulted her. He pistol-

whipped her. He beat her so bad that he thought he had killed her, and when he was arrested, he was mad that he hadn’t killed her. He was captured and he was tried. A jury in Houston, Texas, convicted him and gave him 99 years in the Texas penitentiary, which he earned and deserved.

But Lisa’s life fell apart. She never went back to school. She lost her job. Her husband, the kind of individual he was, sued her for divorce, got all the children and left the State. She started using drugs, first alcohol and then everything else. Not long after the trial, I received a phone call from Lisa’s mother telling me that she had taken her own life, and she left a note that I still have today that says, “I am tired of running from Luke Johnson in my nightmares.”

You see, crime occurs. Victims are victimized. But sometimes they live a short life thereafter because of the crime that has occurred. And no crime is more devastating to a victim than sexual assault.

So it is important that we designate April as National Sexual Assault and Awareness Month so we can educate our fellow citizens on these statistics and encourage rape and sexual assault victims to no longer be afraid. We need to promote justice for sexual assault victims, because justice is what we do in America.

And that’s just the way it is.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to urge my colleagues to support this resolution. As we have heard, this bill supports the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and highlights the need for increased awareness about this major public health issue. I wish to again commend my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), for his heartfelt and strong leadership on this issue, and urge all of my colleagues to support its passage.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 330, which supports the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

I was the lead Democratic sponsor of the original legislation, introduced by former Representative Mark Green and signed into law in 2003, that designated April as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

It is important that we remember that preventing sexual assault should be a top priority during each month of the year. Every 2½ minutes, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted. I have long been a champion of increased efforts to prevent violence against women and in 2004, legislation that I first introduced, “The Debbie Smith Act,” was signed into law. Through this landmark act, we have the ability to protect our daughters, our sisters, and our friends by putting rapists behind bars through DNA evidence. We know that DNA evidence is better than a fresh set of fingerprints. And we know that it is often better than eyewitness testimony. With “The Debbie

Smith Act,” the hundreds of thousands of rape kits that were gathering dust across the country are finally being processed.

In January I introduced H.R. 5057, “The Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act,” to extend the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Elimination Program through FY 2014. I am pleased to have been joined in introducing the legislation by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, Chairman CONYERS and Ranking Member SMITH.

It is vitally important that we support the Violence Against Women Act by fully funding the important programs that will help women escape abusive and dangerous situations and begin new lives that are free from violence and fear. The organizations, shelters, and counseling centers that are on the front lines of this problem need our steadfast commitment that they will have the resources to continue their important work.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 330, “Supporting the Goals and Ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month”. I would like to thank my distinguished colleague, Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN of Wisconsin, for introducing this important piece of legislation.

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month highlights an issue that has often been covered up even in this great nation. Rape is a violent assault, not a sexually-motivated or gratifying act. The rapist’s aim is to dominate, humiliate, control and degrade the victim. For the victim of sexual assault, it is a wound that while covered never truly heals.

TEXAS STATISTICS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

Approximately 1.9 million adult Texans, or 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men, have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime. While these numbers are daunting they pale in comparison to the vast number of incidents that we never hear about.

An estimated 82 percent of rapes go unreported. The vast majority of rape victims—nearly 80 percent—know the person who rapes them.

In any given year, sexual assault of adults costs the state of Texas \$27,161,428. Nine percent of sexual assault victims in Texas sought medical care after being victimized (5 percent of male victims, 10 percent of female victims).

Over 30,000 sexual assault survivors receive services at Texas rape crisis centers each year. Sadly approximately 43 Texas counties are not currently served by a rape crisis center or other victim’s assistance organization. Which leaves victims feeling further isolated and without support from the local community.

As of January 1, 2005, there were 2,546 cases pending for sexual assault of an adult and 10,543 cases pending for sexual assault or indecency with a child. In that same year, there were only 559 convictions for sexual assault of an adult, and 2,449 convictions for sexual assault or indecency with a child.

PREVENTION

For many years now, rape crisis centers across Texas and the U.S. have provided invaluable services to survivors of sexual violence while also educating their communities

about the prevalence and nature of sexual violence. Unfortunately, the need for services continues to exceed the capacity of most of our State's crisis centers. In order to address the astonishing rates of sexual violence, we are now increasing our focus on the primary prevention of sexual violence.

Plainly put, we're trying to engage communities to stop sexual violence before it occurs and to build safe, healthy communities. Dr. George Albee, a pioneer in clinical psychology, put it best, "No mass disorder afflicting humankind has been eliminated or brought under control by attempts at treating the affected individual. Sexual violence prevention requires comprehensive, community-based initiatives that address the various systemic issues, attitudes, behaviors and norms that perpetuate sexual violence."

As a member of the Women's and Children's Caucus, I strongly urge my colleagues to examine the issue of sexual assault and prevention. Let's stop trying to sweep the issue under the rug simply because it is difficult to hear. For it affects you and me, and our families and our communities. Eighty-two percent of victims reported that the rape permanently changed them. Thirteen percent of rape victims attempt suicide. Thirty percent said they contemplated suicide.

These lasting scars are on the hearts, minds, and souls of women, men, and children. Sexual Assault—Sexual Violence is a problem that must be dealt with for it is not going away.

As the electronic games our children play, the sexual exploitation and violence they see on television grows, and the miseducation of what love, sex, and violence really mean continues to exist. We will need to highlight this important issue.

In the time it took me to give this statement, someone in America was sexually assaulted for the Department of Justice has stated that every two minutes someone in America is sexually assaulted. I express my support for the designation of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. I believe we should increase public awareness of sexual assault and continue to look at new ways to focus on prevention.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 330.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING AMERICA'S TEACHERS

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1130) recognizing the roles and contributions of America's teachers to building and enhancing our Nation's civic, cultural, and economic well-being.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1130

Whereas education and knowledge are the foundation of America's current and future strength;

Whereas teachers and other education staff have earned and deserve the respect of their students and communities for their selfless dedication to community service and the future of our Nation's children;

Whereas the purpose of National Teacher Appreciation Week, May 4, 2008, through May 10, 2008, is to raise public awareness of the unquantifiable contributions of teachers and to promote greater respect and understanding for the teaching profession; and

Whereas a number of organizations representing educators, such as the National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association, are hosting teacher appreciation events in recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives thanks and promotes the profession of teaching to encourage students, parents, school administrators, and public officials to participate in teacher appreciation events during National Teacher Appreciation Week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important contributions that teachers make to our Nation. Next week is National Teacher Appreciation Week. The National PTA created Teacher Appreciation Week in 1984 to show gratitude to the many teachers in the United States. It is a chance for us to thank those individuals who have contributed greatly to society in ways that cannot be measured. It is a chance for us to recognize the selflessness and dedication of teachers and to show our respect for the teaching profession.

Mr. Speaker, we know that good teachers make a tremendous difference to our Nation's youth. During the last decade, a body of evidence has grown to support the notion that teacher quality is the single most important factor outside of the home in affecting student achievement. Teachers serve as excellent role models and instill a love for knowledge and lifelong learning in our students.

We know that teaching is an important profession that deserves our support and respect. Teachers have the important job of helping to shape tomorrow's leaders. Those in the teaching profession work tirelessly for little reward, and good teachers constantly reflect on their lessons and modify instruction to reach the diverse needs of the students in their classrooms. Quality teachers hone their skills and are experts not only in the subject matter, but also in connecting with young people and making learning come alive.

Unfortunately, research has also shown us the negative impacts of teacher shortages. It is important and imperative that schools and communities support teachers. National Teacher Appreciation Week is an opportunity for all of us to pursue and recognize the selfless dedication of our educators. It is also an opportunity for us to recognize the importance of education and make absolutely certain that every child in America has the greatest opportunity to achieve this commodity that we call education. So we have to search our budgets, stretch our imagination and find the resources that are necessary to attract the best and the brightest individuals into the teaching profession.

Yes, there is no greater profession in our country than that of teaching. I call teachers the salt of the Earth, the pillars of the universe, those individuals who give of themselves each and every day so that others will have the opportunity to connect with this vast reservoir of knowledge that we have to be spread around.

I am indeed pleased, Mr. Speaker, to join with all of those who urge passage of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1130, recognizing the roles and contributions of America's teachers in educating and nurturing our Nation's children and thereby building and enhancing our Nation's civic, cultural and economic well-being.

A teacher's role in student development is irreplaceable. All of our lives have been influenced by the teachers that directed our classrooms, classrooms where students acquire the knowledge necessary to become a part of our Nation's future.

Showing teachers appreciation and recognition during the upcoming National Teacher Appreciation Week which takes place next week helps to remind us how important teachers are and what an integral role they play in the lives of our Nation's citizens. It is important that we recognize teachers for the critical work they do in improving our Nation in so many ways.

Teachers today devote more of their lives to teaching young people than ever before and spend more time on professional development, their own education and on class preparation outside the classroom. Teachers spend an average of over 50 hours per week on teaching duties and an average of \$443